

Talk on the Vincentian Solidarity Office



by Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

*Director
of the Vincentian Solidarity Office*

Introduction

Good morning! Thank you for welcoming me to the Visitors' Meeting. I am happy to be with you today to speak about the Vincentian Solidarity Office or VSO. Many of you here in the room are already familiar with the services of the VSO. The outline of my talk is divided into eight parts:

- I. The Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)
- II. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF)
- III. The Eligibility List for VSO Service
- IV. How to Apply for Financial Assistance for VSO Projects
- V. How to Apply for VSF Micro-Project Grants
- VI. The VSO Bulletin and VSO Website
- VII. A Progress Report on the Vincentian Solidarity Office
- VIII. Some Examples of Funded Projects

I. The Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)

Our former Superior General, Father Robert Maloney, C.M., and his Council established the VSO on June 15, 2002. The goal of the VSO is: *"To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for their works and needs."* The VSO is an optional service that a province, vice-province or mission can use to help finance projects that benefit our confreres or the people they serve in their apostolates. The VSO officially opened for service on January 1, 2003.

The VSO is a program of the General Curia. The Superior General and his Council supervise the activities of the VSO. The staff of the VSO consists of two people. Father Maloney appointed me as the first Director of the VSO. Scott Fina, Ph.D., who is a married layman, joined the VSO as the Associate Director on July 12, 2004. The VSO is located at St. Vincent's Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is the Provincial House of the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States.

Our contact information at the VSO is as follows:

Vincentian Solidarity Office
500 East Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144
United States of America

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M. (Director)
+1 215-843-9018 (Telephone)
cmvso@yahoo.com (E-mail)

Scott Fina (Associate Director)
+1 215-848-1985, Extension 248 (Telephone)
sfina@cmphlsvs.org (E-mail)

+1 215-843-9361 (Fax)
www.famvin/vso (Website)

II. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF)

To help the VSO accomplish its goal, the Superior General and his Council established the Vincentian Solidarity Fund or VSF. The VSF is a fund belonging to the General Curia. The money in the VSF comes from contributions made by provinces, houses, confreres and others. The VSO administers the VSF with the approval of the Superior General and his Council and with the assistance of the Treasurer General.

The VSO uses the monies from the VSF for two purposes.

First, VSF monies are used to match up to 50% of the cash costs of a VSO project beyond the local contribution. The other 50% of the cash costs for a VSO project must come from other funding sources, e.g., grants from donor agencies. VSF matching funds are restricted and can only be released once monies are secured from other funding sources for a particular VSO project.

Second, VSF monies are used to award grants of up to \$ 5,000 United States Dollars (USD) for micro-projects. A VSF micro-project grant finances 100% of the expenses for a particular micro-project.

III. The Eligibility List for VSO Service

Our Superior General, Father Gregory Gay, C.M., and his Council revised and expanded the list of provinces, vice-provinces and missions eligible for VSO service in March of 2007.

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION PROVINCES, VICE-PROVINCES AND MISSIONS ELIGIBLE FOR VSO SERVICE <i>Organized under the Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia</i> <i>Approved by the Superior General and His Council in March of 2007</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>COVIAM</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Conference of the Visitors in Africa and Madagascar)</i></p> <p>Congo *</p> <p>Ethiopia *</p> <p>Madagascar *</p> <p>Mozambique * *</p> <p>Nigeria * *</p> <p>St. Justin de Jacobis *</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CEVIM</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Conference of Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission of Europe and the Orient)</i></p> <p>France - Paris (only Algeria, Cameroon and Vietnam) *</p> <p>France - Toulouse (only Iran)</p> <p>Hungary</p> <p>Italy - Naples (only Albania)</p> <p>Orient</p> <p>Portugal</p> <p>Slovakia *</p> <p>Slovenia (only Argentina) *</p> <p>Spain - Barcelona (only Honduras) *</p> <p>Spain - Salamanca (only Mozambique)</p> <p>Spain - Zaragoza (only Honduras)</p> <p>SS. Cyril & Methodius * *</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CLAPVI</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Latin American Conference of Vincentian Provinces)</i></p> <p>Argentina</p> <p>Brazil - Curitiba</p> <p>Brazil - Fortaleza *</p> <p>Brazil - Rio de Janeiro</p> <p>Central America *</p> <p>Chile</p> <p>Colombia *</p> <p>Costa Rica * *</p> <p>Cuba *</p> <p>Ecuador *</p> <p>Mexico *</p> <p>Peru</p> <p>Puerto Rico *</p> <p>Venezuela</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NCV</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(National Conference of Visitors of the United States)</i></p> <p>USA - Eastern (only Panama)</p> <p>USA - Midwest (only Kenya)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GENERAL CURIA</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(International Missions)</i></p> <p>Bolivia *</p> <p>Papua New Guinea</p> <p>Solomon Islands *</p>

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION PROVINCES, VICE-PROVINCES AND MISSIONS ELIGIBLE FOR VSO SERVICE <i>Organized under the Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia</i> <i>Approved by the Superior General and His Council in March of 2007</i>	
<u>APVC</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<i>(Asia Pacific Visitors' Conference)</i>	* Vice-Provinces • Received VSO Service
Australia (only Fiji) •	
China	Provinces: 36
India - North •	Vice-Provinces: 4
India - South •	International Missions of the General Curia: 3
Indonesia •	
Philippines	Total: 43

The provinces, vice-provinces and missions eligible for VSO service are organized under the five Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia. Please note that some provinces can only apply for VSO service for their missions in foreign countries. For example, under the National Conference of Visitors of the United States (NCV), the Eastern Province can only solicit VSO assistance for its mission in Panama.

The new list includes 43 territories: 36 provinces, 4 vice-provinces and the 3 international missions of the General Curia. Of the 47 provinces, 4 vice-provinces and 1 region listed in the Catalogue of the Congregation of the Mission for 2006-2007, 40 of these 52 territories or 77% of the international Congregation is eligible to solicit financial assistance from the VSO for projects.

The VSO funded projects in 58% or 25 of the 43 provinces, vice-provinces and missions on the new eligibility list for VSO service.

IV. How to Apply for Financial Assistance for VSO Projects

A visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia should use the "VSO Project Application Form" in English to request assistance from the VSO for the funding of a project. The application form asks for basic details about the project:

general information, problem statement, goal, objectives, method, budget and evaluation.

Applications that satisfy all of the following six criteria approved by the Superior General and his Council will be accepted for VSO service:

1. The visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia approves and sends the “VSO Project Application Form” to the Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office.
2. The “VSO Project Application Form” is correctly filled out.
3. The province, vice-province or mission submitting the “VSO Project Application Form” is eligible for VSO service, as determined by the Superior General and his Council.
4. The project is a work of the Congregation of the Mission and benefits the needs of the confreres of the province, vice-province or mission, or the people they serve.
5. There is a reasonable chance of securing funds for the project.
6. The Vincentian Solidarity Office has the resources to work on the project.

Once a project is accepted for VSO service, the VSO staff will do the following:

- Investigate sources of funding for the project.
- Write, submit and keep track of grant proposals for the project.
- Transfer grant funds awarded to the project with the assistance of the Treasurer General.
- Ensure that all required financial and evaluation reports for grants are filed on time with donor agencies.

VSO projects can receive matching funds from the VSF.

V. How to Apply for VSF Micro-Project Grants

A visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia should use the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” in English, French or Spanish to request a grant from the VSF of up to \$ 5,000 USD for a micro-project. The application form asks for basic details about the project: general information, problem statement, goal, objectives, method, budget and evaluation.

Applications that satisfy all of the following seven criteria approved by the Superior General and his Council are eligible to be considered for a VSF micro-project grant:

1. The visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia approves and sends the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” to the Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office.
2. The “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” is correctly filled out.
3. The province, vice-province or mission submitting the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” is eligible for VSO service, as determined by the Superior General and his Council.
4. The micro-project is a work of the Congregation of the Mission and benefits the needs of the confreres of the province, vice-province or mission, or the people they serve.
5. The VSF micro-project grant is for \$ 5,000 USD or less.
6. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund has the financial resources to award the VSF micro-project grant.
7. A province, vice-province or mission can only receive one (1) VSF micro-project grant per funding year (May 1 to April 30).

The VSO reviews and decides on applications for VSF micro-project grants four times a year in September, November, February and May.

VI. The VSO Bulletin and VSO Website

The VSO publishes a two-page VSO Bulletin four times a year in March, June, October and December. The General Secretary distributes the VSO Bulletin by e-mail in English, French and Spanish to all of the provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation. It is my hope that you, as Visitors and Vice-Visitors, will distribute the VSO Bulletin to the houses and confreres in your provinces and vice-provinces. Each issue of the VSO Bulletin contains a complete list of all the VSF micro-project grants awarded in the previous month and describes two or three funded projects. Copies of all VSO Bulletins can be found on the VSO website.

The address of the VSO website is www.famvin.org/vso. The VSO website is a simple and functional presentation of the services of the VSO in English, French or Spanish. Most importantly, you can download the application forms in either Microsoft Word or PDF file format from the website. Please visit the VSO website to review the eligibility requirements for VSO services, download the application forms and read about funded projects in the VSO Bulletins.

VII. A Progress Report on the Vincentian Solidarity Office

During the last 4½ years, the VSO accepted 74 VSO projects.

Number of VSO Projects	
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007	
Year	Number
2003	7
2004	10
2005	17
2006	32
2007	8
Total	74

Of these 74 VSO projects, 69 or 93% received either full funding (62 or 84%) or partial funding (7 or 9%).

VSO Projects		
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007		
Status	Number	Percentage
Fully funded	62	84%
Partially funded	7	9%
Not yet funded	3	4%
Withdrawn	2	3%
Total	74	100%

The VSO distributed a total of \$ 2,185,476 USD in funding for VSO projects. The VSO secured \$ 1,175,758 USD from various funding sources, and the VSF supplied \$ 1,009,718 USD in matching funds.

Money for VSO Projects	
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007	
Source	Amount in USD
VSO	\$ 1,175,758
VSF	\$ 1,009,718
Total	\$ 2,185,476

The program to award VSF micro-project grants began two years ago. Since that time, the VSO awarded 32 VSF micro-project grants totaling \$ 160,000 USD.

VSF Micro-Project Grants		
July 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007		
Year	Number	Amount in USD
2005-2006	15	\$ 75,000
2006-2007	17	\$ 85,000
Total	32	\$ 160,000

To sum up the progress report, the VSO provided \$ 2,345,476 USD to fund 101 projects from 25 provinces, vice-provinces and international missions of the Congregation of the Mission.

Summary of Progress Report on the VSO			
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007			
	Funded Projects	Amount in USD	Number
VSO Projects	69	\$ 2,185,476	
VSF Micro-Projects Grants	32	\$ 160,000	
Provinces			19
Vice-Provinces			4
International Missions of the General Curia			2
Total	101	\$ 2,345,476	25

VIII. Some Examples of Funded Projects

To give you some examples of the types of projects funded by the VSO, I have selected only one project from 22 countries around the world. This is not a complete list of all of the projects funded by the VSO in these countries nor does it include every country that received VSO assistance.

	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNDED PROJECT
1	MEXICO	School expenses, kitchen equipment and food supplies for homeless street children at the Casa-Hogar sponsored by "Juventud y Vida, A.C." at the Parroquia de Santa Anna in Cuautla, Mexico
2	BOLIVIA	Food supplies for the nutritional feeding program for children in daycare at the "Guarderías San Francisco" of the Parroquia San Francisco de Humanata, Bolivia
3	NORTH INDIA	Construction of 14 water wells for children in school hostels operated by the North Indian Province in the State of Orissa, India
4	HONDURAS	Funding for a prevention project for youth called APREDES: "Amigos Previendo la entrada al Mundo de las Drogas, Delincuencia y Explotación Sexual" sponsored by the "Amigos Para Siempre" program of the "Asociación de Padres Paulinos" in the City of San Pedro Sula, Honduras
5	COLOMBIA	Opening of the "Albergue para Destechados Julia Chau de Rojas" shelter for homeless men in Popayán, Colombia
6	CAMEROON	Opening of the "Centre de Formation Informatique St. Vincent de Paul" for young people in Nkol Afemé (Yaoundé), Cameroon
7	MADAGASCAR	Construction of a channel and retention basin for rainwater at the "Centre de Formation Technique et Professionnelle d'Akandrina," Madagascar
8	FIJI	Funding for the St. Vincent's College Hostel Farming Project at St. John the Apostle Parish in Natovi, Fiji
9	EL SALVADOR	Furniture, computer equipment and materials for the formation of pastoral agents at the Parroquia San Antonio de Padua in Laguna Seca, El Salvador
10	ETHIOPIA	Construction of St. Justin de Jacobis Church in Ambo, Ethiopia
11	UKRAINE	Construction of the Pastoral Center of Divine Mercy at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church in Perechin, Ukraine
12	ARGENTINA	Construction of a gymnasium for the "Centro Recreativo y Deportivo Medalla Milagrosa of the Parroquia Virgen de la Medalla Milagrosa" in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina

	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNDED PROJECT
13	CUBA	Construction of a security wall and the restoration of the altar and sanctuary at the Iglesia San Francisco de Asís in Santiago de Cuba, Republic of Cuba
14	BRAZIL	Reconditioned boat for pastoral work at the Paróquia de São José in Tucuruí, Brazil
15	NIGERIA	Construction of St. Justin's Seminary for internal seminarists in Ogobia, Nigeria
16	TANZANIA	Construction of De Paul Seminary for philosophy and theology students in Morogoro, Tanzania
17	SLOVAKIA	Furniture and equipment for the chapel in the Provincial House and the Missionary Priest Seminary for theology students in Bratislava, Slovakia
18	HAITI	Computers and furniture for the aspirants' study room at the Mission House in Port-au-Prince, Haiti
19	ERITREA	Computer equipment and a photocopier machine for the philosophy and theology students at Mary Immaculate Seminary in Ambagagliano and the new formation house in Adi-Shiel in Asmara, Eritrea
20	CONGO	Plumbing repairs at the "Scolasticat St. Vincent de Paul" for philosophy and theology students in Kimwenza-Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
21	SOUTH INDIA	Jeep for the theology students at "Vincentian Vidya Sadan" in Pune, India
22	ECUADOR	Pickup truck for the promotion of vocations and animation of the Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV) in Ecuador

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to thank the members of the General Curia for establishing and supporting the ministry of the VSO. I also wish to express a word of gratitude to the Visitors of the provinces that made contributions to the VSF. Lastly, I ask you to please keep the work of the VSO in your prayers. Thank you!